

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, March 14, 1879, with transcript

Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. Cambridge, Mass., Thursday, March 14th, 1879. Mrs. A. G. Bell, 1509 R. I. Avenue, Washington, D. C. My sweet darling wife:

Why must fate separate us? Why must I be obliged to be here and you in Washington when we should be together all our lives? It is not right — and it must not be. Only the most urgent necessity should take me away from you at all and if I MUST be here for any length of time — my wife and child should be here too. Oh! Mabel dear — I dread absence from you. I feel that separations like this — once begun — are apt to grow. A day away from you — has already grown into a week and now I am preparing for a longer separation still.

It is NOT RIGHT my darling. Let us stop it NOW. Just think how unhappy your mamma was made by the Washington business that took your father from her — little by little — until her home was in Cambridge and his in Washington.

I WON'T HAVE IT my little wife. I won't leave you in that way. I feel that our separations are growing longer and longer.

Don't let us consent to be separated any more. Help me darling to prevent it now. Let us lay it down as a principle of our lives — that we shall be together — that we shall share each others thoughts and lives — and be to one another all that a husband and wife should be. Letters cannot speak as we can — face to face — and heart to heart. Separation must tend towards separation! Fragments of our lives must inevitably drop out of each other's knowledge if 2 we are separated — in spite of daily interchange of written thought — and little by little the breach will widen — until at length we lose the sense of unity of life — and learn to live apart. Oh! Mabel — I am frightened at the mere shadow of

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the picture my imagination has drawn — and I return to you at once ! I have determined to break loose from all that holds me here and I leave Boston tomorrow! Now my sweet wife — don't be angry with me — but welcome me home. I have such a dread of our becoming accustomed to separation and learning to live apart. I start tomorrow evening at six — and when I next leave Washington — I leave it for a temporary absence of a few hours — or for a longer period of time with you!

Good night my sweet love. Help me to keep the resolution I have made tonight I am sure we will never regret it. Kiss little Elsie for me.

Your loving husband, Alec.